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Reconsidering the Modern in Japanese History: Modernity in the Service of the Prewar Japanese Empire

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Although historians have typically portrayed Japanese imperialism in Asia as motivated primarily by economic or atavistic concerns, this essay suggests that cultural dimensions were more important for many, if not most, of the architects of Japan's prewar empire. A consideration for how Japanese went about defining modernity in the first half of the twentieth century and how they applied varying definitions of the term to the creation of the Japanese empire in Manchuria reveals that many Japanese genuinely thought their efforts to be progressive, reflecting as they did trends apparent in Japanese society at home. Indeed, creating a modern Japan entailed the creation of not merely an empire, but of an appropriate empire, and one that in key ways prefigured the implementation of new visions of modernity in Japan itself. The centrality of these attitudes was such that they may help explain why many Japanese today continue to feel little need to apologize to their Asian neighbors for prewar Japanese activities. A secondary concern of this essay is theoretical, suggesting that modernity should be conceived more as a cultural artifact involving broadly shared values and goals subject to constant reevaluation rather than as a problematic abstraction. It is an ever-shifting aspiration, one that encourages individuals to reconsider and reconfigure their environments as those environments evolve. Or we might say—responding to Bruno Latour—we are still modern.

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*Years of the modern! years of the unperform'd!
Your horizon rises—I see it parting away for more august dramas,
I see not America only, not only Liberty's nation but other nations preparing,
I see tremendous entrances and exits, new combinations, the solidarity of races,
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage.
(Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts? are the acts suitable to them closed?)*

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)¹

Coinciding roughly with Japan's emergence from seclusion, Walt Whitman's joyous celebration of the modern garnered meaningful praise among late Meiji Japanese literati.² While Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861-1930) apparently first introduced Whitman to Japan³, a young Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867-1916) proclaimed Whitman's happy arrival as that of "a great man descending from heaven."⁴ Japanese fascination with Whitman did not end there.⁵ While some began translating Whitman's oeuvre,⁶ others began to write in his style.⁷ So rapidly did Whitman gain prominence in Japan that Lafcadio Hearn sought to warn Japanese against Whitman's influence.⁸

It was Whitman's vision of heroic progress that provoked this fascination—both in substance and in style. On the surface, Whitman, who grew up amid the jubilant turmoil of a booming New York City, sought to capture the essence of life in a new age by providing it with a new poetic style, one more appropriate for a fresh and exciting era. A deeper consideration reveals that contrasting with antebellum, anti-modern views emanating from the south, Whitman represented important evolutionary transitions apparent in wider society, including the expansion of a commercial and liberal middle class (including its sensibilities), the advent of industrial capitalism, and the triumph of new technologies.⁹ He noted with special approval the rising significance of the average man.¹⁰ Despite occasional misgivings late in life, Whitman's vision of the modern was optimistic and progressive, rendering him for many a veritable prophet of the modern.¹¹

Just what, however, does "modern" mean? For scholars, its ambiguity poses an interesting challenge. It can, for example, as easily refer to examples of twentieth century architecture as it can to pieces of nineteenth century art or literature or even to certain sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophers. The term's flexibility also enables the classification of the most recent three or four centuries in world history as belonging to either the "early modern" or "modern" eras, even though distinguishing the transition from one era to the next is not always a simple task.

Despite this confusion, the term is not without its uses—hence its continued wide circulation. This essay suggests that the term can be especially useful if considered with the progressive and strident presumptions implicit in the perspectives of Whitman and his kind. These people looked upon the unfolding of an explicitly modern world favorably, if not impatiently. What is more, likeminded individuals could be found not only throughout society, but throughout the world. In this case, the poets were not alone.

With regard to Japan, perhaps the most pointed recent statement to this effect can be found in the work of Sheldon Garon. Indeed, Garon goes so far as to assert that a consideration for modernity is essential if one is to understand the general course of twentieth century Japanese history. His examination of the pivotal roles played by reformist Japanese bureaucrats illustrates well that their underlying impulses were fundamentally and consciously modern.¹²

At the same time, Garon's work also usefully calls attention to the darker aspects of these efforts, for in order to implement modernity, many of the progressives pursuing the modern encouraged more authoritarian forms of government. In a similar vein, Louise

Young has noted the dual nature of modern impulses involved in the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo 満州国.¹³ Just as the seizure of Manchuria¹⁴ by the Kantōgun 関東軍¹⁵—or Guandong (Kwantung) Army—led inexorably to further expansion and war, it facilitated also the influence of certain elements within Japanese society. In this view, imperialism becomes not simply something Japanese implemented outside of the country—imperialism becomes central to developing a modern state and society at home as well.¹⁶ Young, however, goes one step further than Garon, noting that modernist projects in Manchukuo were ultimately unstable: “[b]y the advent of the Pacific War, Manchukuo was clearly destroying itself from within.”¹⁷ Modernity in Manchuria included its discontents.

These efforts are inspiring, molding and polishing as they do a powerful lens for scholarly use. This is timely because historical scholarship—especially that concerned with Japan—has been long vexed by the shadow of an earlier means of conceiving the modern, that of modernization theory. This was a perspective that implicitly asserted a discoverable developmental road to a teleologically satisfactory end—that achieved by “the West” (whatever that term may mean) itself.¹⁸ As such it was a perspective that later historians challenged not only for its utility but also for its validity.¹⁹ So great was the ensuing revulsion against modernization theory that until recently any use of the “m-word” by historians became practically taboo.

It is for helping to overcome this aversion that recent scholarship concerned with modernity in Japan and its empire is to be applauded. However, a close reading of this literature suggests that a gap yet remains. While Garon examines events within Japan, Young focuses on events in one corner of the Japanese empire chiefly as they played out in Japan. Missing is a focused discussion of the Japanese creation of the modern in the empire overseas. Fortunately, some recent work is beginning to address this gap,²⁰ work best described as studies of colonial modernity.²¹

This essay seeks to contribute to this effort by outlining some of the ways in which modernity is useful—if not indispensable—to understand how Japanese went about constructing their prewar empire. Not simply an array of idiosyncratic personal endeavors, creating the modern was a shared endeavor, resulting in the constitution of a broadly—but not completely—shared culture that defined modernity according to specific reference points. Through practice and debate, however, shared goals and values changed, resulting in identifiable eras as short as a decade or two.

This phenomenon is evident in Japanese activities in prewar Manchuria. After briefly considering aspects of the emergent Meiji state relevant to imperialist endeavors, this essay addresses the creation of modernity in the two eras of Japanese imperialism apparent in Manchuria: that occurring before the Manchurian Incident of September 18, 1931 and that occurring after the military seizure of the region.²² Providing both justification and a program for Japanese activities, visions of the modern galvanized Japanese in Manchuria into divergent courses of action, each course demonstrating rival definitions of the modern. Each era offers a window through which currents in both

Manchurian as well as Japanese societies can be assessed.

Despite these differences, taken together, Manchurian modernities also reveal that in extending their control, many if not most Japanese consistently thought they were acting in a progressive manner. Indeed, modernist projects in both eras in Manchuria proved to be no sideshows²³—they were significant for contemporary modernist projects in Japan itself. This helps explain why so many Japanese in those years supported the kinds of activities occurring in places like Manchuria that growing numbers of Chinese and other foreigners increasingly challenged. Moreover, the influence of prewar modernist projects has remained considerable through the postwar period, and this may help explain why many Japanese have found it difficult to apologize for many prewar activities.

On a theoretical level, this essay also hopes to encourage a more practical definition of modernity. Rather than perceive modernity as a kind of broadly shared stage in human evolution²⁵—a stage that some assert is more imagined than real²⁶—it makes more sense to conceive modernity as a continuously unfolding project, an ever-distant goal beckoning energetic minds to improve their current situations in ways best seen fit.²⁷ This means, then, that modernity is not a constant. Influenced by factors both indigenous and foreign, modernity is constantly reinvented to fit new contexts and meet new needs. A cultural construct, modernity itself evolves.²⁸

MODERNITY IN MEIJI JAPAN

*I see Freedom, completely arm'd and victorious and very haughty, with Law on
one side and Peace on the other,
A stupendous trio all issuing forth against the idea of caste;
What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach?
I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions,
I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken,
I see the landmarks of European kings removed,
I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all others give way;)*

The pursuit of modernity in Meiji Japan provided the launching pad for creating modernity in Manchuria. Reviewing this experience, however, reveals that it was not a straightforward process. It involved continuous debate, practice, and assessment. It proved also to be a process that was inherently international—not only because of the search for foreign models, but because it required the creation of an empire.

The Meiji era witnessed extraordinarily widespread and far-reaching changes in Japanese society, changes usually portrayed as progressive. Not only did Japanese perceive these changes in this light, but so did many foreigners, and it was largely because of these changes that foreign powers became willing to terminate the unequal treaties that pro-

tected them from what they thought were barbarous legal and other practices. Notably, while Japan regained tariff and legal autonomy by 1911—only some fifty years after the imposition of the unequal treaties—not until the era of the Second World War did China do so, and then only with support from the United States.

Although some attribute Japan's transformations to progressive government leadership, it is important to recall that Japanese society at large was receptive to new ways. Indeed, despite some challenges—perhaps most notably the 1877 Satsuma Rebellion—the creation of a Meiji modernity was a genuinely popular phenomenon.²⁹ This was possible because despite Japan's long era of seclusion, there occurred a gradual erosion of the samurai order that rendered society ripe to embrace new forms of social organization.³⁰ This is evident in the twin Meiji slogans promoting change, *bunmei kaika* (文明開化, "civilization and enlightenment") and *fukoku kyōhei* (富国強兵 "rich country and strong army"), were embraced popularly, enabling Japanese society as a whole to address perceived weaknesses with speed.³¹ As a result, Meiji efforts proved surprisingly successful, enabling Japan to join a second wave of states embracing industrial capitalism.³² This is why such efforts extended beyond the political and economic realms to include many facets of Japanese life, including efforts to redefine mores, school curricula, proper ways of dress, and the built environment.³³ Creating modernity in Meiji was a cultural activity.

Despite—or because of—this popularity, deciding what constituted modernity did not proceed smoothly. The definition took shape haphazardly, requiring both debate as well as trial and error.³⁴ This was in part because Meiji's modernity did not follow foreign blueprints. After selectively studying foreign models, Japanese usually adapted imported ways carefully to suit their own needs. Even then, fine-tuning was required.³⁵ (Of course, in one way this endeavor involved nothing new—Japanese had previous experience appropriating Chinese models, adjusting them to suit Japanese conditions as well.³⁶)

Given the kinds of changes present in Tokugawa Japan and the paths that change followed in Meiji, it is fair to say that contact with communities beyond Asia did not induce novel responses so much as it catalyzed already extant domestic capabilities. Instead of perceiving Japanese reforms as simple "Westernization"—a terribly inexact and misleading term—it is more appropriate to recognize a strong local impulse towards a modernity initially—but not entirely—defined elsewhere.

Significantly, that modernity included an imperialist impulse, in large part because the prevailing global modernity entailed the creation of empire. Indeed, for Japanese, imperialism arrived initially more as a threat than as a model.³⁷ National security issues were of paramount concern for the infant Meiji state. This began with anxieties over the territorial security of the home islands, but in the face of the Occident's final expansionary drive for colonies and the withering of Chinese power and prestige, this came to include other islands in Japan's immediate vicinity. The successful securing of this periphery, however, in turn resulted in the gradual widening of definitions of strategic interests to include more distant lands. Excepting only Hideyoshi's unsuccessful forays into Korea—and possibly the seizure of Okinawa by Satsuma han—this kind of expan-

sionary drive, however, is not a recurring theme in Japanese history and should be considered an act of a new era.

At the same time, the global society that Japan was joining posed not only a military threat but a civilizational threat as well. This helps explain the popular agitation for modernity in Meiji. It also explains the creation of a Japanese colonial modernity which, unsurprisingly, manifested a similar pattern to the one at home: it was popular, despite assuming foreign forms it was the product of domestic forces, and it did not unfold smoothly.³⁸ Violence and sharp debate were recurring themes amid the empire too.

The creation of a Japanese empire in Meiji was part and parcel of the Japanese creation of a Japanese industrial capitalist modernity. Not only did many Japanese think that a “great power” (*rekkyō* 列強) required imperialist possessions, but the new military necessary to defend the realm and secure colonies thought it also required expansion to insure sufficient sources of supply and strategic high ground. Moreover, in addition to enhancing the economic strength of the empire, the securing of foreign subjects was similarly thought to enhance society at home, making imperialism seem good for the whole. This is perhaps most evident in the growing popularity of Herbert Spencer and “social Darwinism” in Meiji Japan.³⁹ It was also apparent in the altruistic concerns of budding imperialists, something usually presented as a version of *la mission civilisatrice*.⁴⁰

To successfully incorporate new lands, it became necessary to develop appropriate infrastructure. It is well known that this included a new and modern military establishment,⁴¹ but usually less emphasized is the fact that the imperial project included also the development of a modern administrative infrastructure. While Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial Universities were founded in part to provide trained personnel for Japanese government and industry, Takushoku University 拓殖大学 was founded in 1900 in part to help serve the emerging empire. Beyond that, legally incorporated volunteer associations were founded to promote interest in successful development of Japan’s new colonial holdings.⁴² Eventually, new corporations emerged to help develop these lands, the best-known being the Oriental Development Company (Tōyō Takushoku Kaisha 東洋拓殖会社), founded in 1908. Enterprising economic entities were also quick to find profits either in empire or in linking it to Japan.⁴³

Illustrative examples of how these strands of thought merged in late Meiji are usually provided in the likes of Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835-1901) and Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (1863-1957). Less famous, however, was a host of government functionaries, academics, and other public figures who similarly envisioned Japan as a modern imperialist state. One was Takahashi Sakue 高橋作衛 (1867-1920), an 1894 graduate of Tokyo Imperial University’s Faculty of Law and later a professor there.⁴⁴ Writing a year prior to the Russo-Japanese War, he argued that Japanese action in Manchuria was both a “right” (*kenri* 権利) and a “duty” (*gimu* 義務). It was a right because the terms of the treaty that ended the Sino-Japanese War entitled Japan to keep the peace in East Asia. It was a duty because of precedent: Japan had acted previously to secure the peace in the Ryūkyūs, Taiwan, and Korea. In Takahashi’s view, it was the Russian advance into Asia that desta-

bilized the region, endangering even Japan. While the establishment of a Russian naval threat in the Yellow and Japan Seas threatened Japanese command of the seas around Japan, the Russian penetration of Manchuria constrained Japanese potential growth and confined the Japanese to Japan. Takahashi, for one, already envisioned a Japanese role on the Asian mainland beyond Korea. He insisted, however, that in rectifying the situation Japan needed to act strictly in accordance with prevailing standards of international law and precedent. For example, he concluded that future Japanese actions against Russians in Chinese territory were legally justifiable, basing his conclusions on incidents like the 1838 Caroline Incident, in which British marines in Canada acting in self-defense destroyed destabilizing forces in American waters.⁴⁵

In the wake of the ensuing Russo-Japanese War, other Japanese sought to ameliorate fears of Japan's rising power by noting that Japan's new found prowess was an example of civilizational advancement. For example, in his analysis of Japan as a great power, Seiji Hishida (1874-?) distinguished between Russia's "'policy of exclusiveness' and her 'tradition of irresponsible authority'" with that "of Japan, who has, on the one hand, consciously adopted the Anglo-Saxon principle of national freedom and equality of opportunity, but who has, on the other hand, kindred sympathies and traditional relations with the backward nations of Asia."⁴⁶ Hishida insisted that Japan had acted not only morally correctly, but also in accordance with international law. He further emphasized that the growing Japanese empire would continue to identify with these modern values. Indeed, Hishida, with a Ph.D. from Columbia University, went on to serve this empire in a modern capacity himself (discussed below).

Proving to be a quick study, Imperial Japan's successes were impressive—at its wartime height the Japanese empire eventually spanned almost a fifth of the globe. Imperial Japan had by that point taken part in four wars and a number of isolated "incidents" that, with the important exception of the Manchurian Incident, were not qualitatively different from the actions of other imperialist powers over the previous century. Indeed, many Japanese diplomatic and military initiatives occurred in cooperation with other imperialist powers. Imperialist-minded Japanese demonstrated a strong predilection to follow international precedents, much as the institution of new forms of Meiji society did.⁴⁷

Of Japan's various colonies, Manchuria proved to be of central significance to this budding empire, and as such, it witnessed an enormous influx of Japanese.

THE MODERNITY OF THE MANTETSU ERA

*Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day,
 Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God,
 Lo, how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest!
 His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere, he colonizes the Pacific, the archipelagoes,
 With the steamship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale engines of war,
 With these and the world-spreading factories he interlinks all geography, all lands;*

Expanding the empire was one thing, but consolidating it and rendering it usable by Japanese was another. In addition to securing military victories and international recognition, Meiji authorities needed also to encourage local acceptance of Japanese rule as well as encourage the use of the empire by Japanese civilians.⁴⁸ In the wake of the Russo-Japanese War, in Manchuria this fell to a newly created triumvirate consisting of the Kantōgun, the Japanese consular service, and what was to become Japan's largest prewar corporation, the South Manchurian Railway Company, commonly referred to as Mantetsu 満鉄.⁴⁹ These three organizations, however, maintained different responsibilities. Before the Manchurian Incident, the Kantōgun controlled directly only the Guangdong Government-General (Kantō Sōtokufu 関東総督府), supervising all lands on the Liaodong 遼東 Peninsula leased by Japan. Outside of these leased lands the consular service was the chief Japanese authority—entailing its own police force—though mundane affairs pertaining to the railway and its “attached lands” (*fuzokuchi* 付属地) were left to Mantetsu.

This tripartite arrangement was prone to interservice rivalries, and differing goals lay the seeds for future conflict.⁵⁰ As in the Japanese home islands, defining modernity in Manchuria was subject to contending views. That said, the Japanese construction of the modern in Manchuria before the Manchurian Incident fell chiefly to Mantetsu.

Mantetsu's vision of modernity is evident in a variety of ways, but first consider its leadership. The first president was Gotō Shimpei 後藤新平 (1857-1929), a doctor turned official bureaucrat. Eventually promoted to a barony in the post-Restoration aristocracy, his career paralleled that of the rising Japanese state, illustrating well the role that empire played in the development of a modern Japan.⁵¹

Having distinguished himself through his work at the Nagoya Medical School and at the military hospital in Osaka during the Satsuma Rebellion, Gotō joined the Home Ministry's medical bureau in 1883, eventually becoming its head. While at the ministry, in 1890 he published his *Principles of National Health* (国家衛生原理) and took part in the creation of new sewage and water facilities in Tokyo. This recommended him to Army Vice-Minister Kodama Gentarō 児玉源太郎 (1852-1906), who made Gotō chief of the Army Quarantine Office looking after the return of more than 230,000 soldiers from the Sino-Japanese War (1895-95). After the war, Gotō returned to the Home Ministry, but remained involved in overseas affairs, advising the new Japanese administration on



Figure 1. Gotō Shimpei. Source: Mantetsu 1937a.

Taiwan about health issues. In 1896, Kodama, now governor-general of Taiwan, asked Gotō to join him there, eventually making Gotō the first civilian governor of the island in 1898.

After Gotō's term as first president of Mantetsu expired in 1908, he returned to Japan where he not only later served as Foreign Minister and mayor of Tokyo, but also founded the Institute of Municipal Research (*Toshi Kenkyū Kai* 都市研究会) in 1917, an organization he supervised until his death. This institution published the influential *Toshi Kōron* 都市公論, a journal that published articles on urban planning by Japan's premier academics and bureaucrats and served as a pulpit from which Gotō continued to press for a modern Japan. That Gotō's efforts were multifaceted is demonstrated by his helping to found the Boy Scouts of Japan as well as his

forging links with like-minded individuals elsewhere, such as the American revisionist historian and political commentator Charles A. Beard (1874-1948).⁵² Gotō could have described himself as a progressive modernist, and his colonial experiences provided him with practical experience useful to effecting change in Japan itself.

As president of Mantetsu, Gotō tried to encourage Chinese acknowledgment of Japanese rule by applying what he called "biological principles" (*seibutsugaku no genri* 生物学の原理) of imperialism, a policy aimed at inducing Chinese acceptance through encouraging economic development and acknowledging local customs of self-rule.⁵³ At the same time, however, Gotō worked closely with the military. He had no qualms, for example, about using military force to terminate Taiwanese resistance.⁵⁴ Indeed, it was likely because Gotō could work with the military that he received official positions.⁵⁵

The main arena exhibiting Mantetsu's activities under Gotō was the string of new cities that the company built alongside its newly acquired railway. Inspired in part by Russian constructions in Dalian 大連 (Jp. Dairen, Russian Dal'ny), Gotō wanted to show the world what Japanese were capable of building.⁵⁶ From its inception, Mantetsu was more than just a railway company—though ostensibly modeled on quasi-imperial European corporations, Mantetsu included much more.⁵⁷ Much academic attention, for example, has been paid to Mantetsu's Economic Research Bureau, a corporate research organization that examined in detail a wide range of issues going far beyond the needs of the railway. Its publications included historical, social, and cultural topics as well.⁵⁸

Chief among Mantetsu's cities was the port of Dalian. The heart of the Guandong leased territories, this city oversaw much of the Japanese presence in Manchuria. As a transportation hub it connected the riches of inland Manchuria with markets overseas, and as an administrative hub it exhibited the rapid growth of governmental, academic, hospital, and other infrastructure.⁶⁰ Headquarters for many Japanese corporations and institutions in Manchuria could be found in Dalian, including construction as well as commercial firms. One of the earliest was Okada Engineering (岡田工務所), a firm that, employing recent graduates of Tokyo University, helped reshape the southern Manchurian landscape to suit the tastes of Japanese empire builders. Some in this firm had connections with Tatsuno Kingo 辰野金吾 (1854-1919), the architect of Tokyo Station (1914) and other famous Meiji architectural landmarks.⁶¹ Connections like that, along with others made through the Association of Japanese Architects (Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai 日本建築学界)⁶² or through the new *Journal of Manchurian Architecture* (*Manshū kenchiku zasshi* 満州建築雑誌),⁶³ helped insure that a particular architectural style—that popularized by Tatsuno, sometimes called the “Tatsuno style” (辰野式)—initially became the standard throughout Japanese Manchuria. This involved



Figure 3. Shenyang Station. Source: Mantetsu 1930, p. 46.



Figure 2. One of the more enduring symbols of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century global modernity, images of Mantetsu's newest locomotives abounded in publications of Manchuria. Source: Mantetsu 1937a.⁵⁹

a somewhat grand interpretation of the style of historical eclecticism that was popular in contemporary Europe. Eventually other styles gained popularity, such as Japanese expressions of art nouveau and what later emerged as the international style. Reflecting developments not only in Japan but also in Europe and in Europe's colonies, Japanese expressions of the built environment in Manchuria part of a global discourse.⁶⁴

Eager to build treaty-ports further

inland, and seeking to entice Japanese immigration and entrepreneurs there, Mantetsu supervised a frenzy of construction, with planners envisioning five types of new urban centers.⁶⁵ This occurred mainly in the “attached lands” that appeared near Chinese cities—the largest of which were adjacent Shenyang 瀋陽,⁶⁶ Liaoyang 遼陽, and Changchun 長春. These three cities were not, however, the only urban locales in which the Japanese were interested, as an official Mantetsu history later noted that while the Japanese initially identified fifteen former Russian towns as places to develop “cultural cities” (*bunmeiteki toshi* 文明的都市), Japanese eventually designed plans for one hundred and forty.⁶⁷

Nor were these locales the only venues demonstrating new built environments. Between Mantetsu’s new towns and the already extant Chinese cities, new “mercantile districts” (*shōfuchi* 商埠地) appeared. Here could be found Chinese creations of the modern, some inspired by Japanese creations and some competing with Japanese concerns.⁶⁸

Designing Mantetsu’s cities often entailed specific goals. While the Mantetsu town at Shenyang, the largest outside Dalian, became an industrial and commercial center, Fushun 撫順 developed as a coal mining center and nearby Anshan 鞍山 became an iron and steel manufacturing center. Seven hundred kilometers north of Dalian lay



Figure 5. Dalian’s Central Research Laboratory (中央試験所試験室). Source: Mantetsu 1937a.



Figure 4. Shenyang’s Yamato Hotel. Source: Mantetsu 1937a.

Mantetsu’s northernmost city at Changchun, a city dedicated to the collection of soybeans from central Manchuria—so much so that some nicknamed it the “Bean Capital” (*mame no miyako* 豆の都).⁶⁹

Nor was the economic exploitation of Manchuria limited to these industries. Mantetsu encouraged an array of economic endeavors, including the development of such light industries such as soybean



Figure 6. Agricultural Experimental Station at Gongzhuling (公主嶺農事試驗場). Source: South Manchuria Railway, 1929.

oil processing, flour milling, alcohol distilling, cotton manufacturing, match and cigarette manufacturing, and the making of beet sugar. In the agricultural sector, Mantetsu established experimental farms to foster new crops, livestock, and technologies. Mantetsu also provided new kinds of mulberry trees to enhance sericulture. Other Mantetsu endeavors aimed at expanding the

exploitation of Manchuria's forests, fisheries, and ores, such as gold.

Mantetsu also operated ports, shipping lines, warehouses, and telegraphic communications. In some ways Mantetsu's activities were reminiscent of the opening of the American West—the railway lay track, established cities, and promoted the capacity to make profits. The scale of operations, however, was vastly different, and, more importantly, run by what in effect were Japanese civil servants, Mantetsu appeared to be playing an almost national role—or, more correctly, a modernizing national role.⁷⁰

Mantetsu's new cities, for example, were laid out according to modern principles of urban planning. For example, the Shenyang and Changchun towns were designed by 1894 Tokyo University civil engineering graduate Katō Yonokichi 加藤與之吉 (1867-?), who thought rectangular city shapes and a grid pattern for streets typified modern urban planning.⁷¹ Katō also implemented rudimentary zoning laws—something that did not appear in Japan until 1919. Mantetsu went on to provide appropriate physical infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, libraries, and auditoriums. Roads were paved with macadam, electrical grids were installed,⁷² and professionally-designed parks and other recreational space appeared. For example, Changchun's West Park (西公園) was designed by a Tokyo University professor Shirasawa Yasumi 白澤保美 (1868-1947). It offered space for athletics, boats, flower beds, a small zoo, a merry-go-round, and other children's amusements.⁷³

Mantetsu's architects also developed new kinds of home construction. As a result, Japanese-built housing in Manchuria represented a new way of living, reorganizing as they did patterns of daily life. Architects could even be found boasting of their abilities. One contributor to the *Journal of Manchurian Architecture* suggested that architects too could function as progressively crusading civil servants.⁷⁴ Others, however, concerned that Manchuria needed a gentler guiding hand, insisted on the need for continued compromise in the creation of a culture of the future.⁷⁵

Mantetsu's cities represented civilizational development, offering solutions to prob-

lems apparent both in Manchuria and in the Japanese home islands. Mantetsu publicists never ceased to extol the virtues of these cities—not only in Japanese⁷⁶ but in English.⁷⁷ The best-known of these publications is perhaps the Mantetsu series *Reports on Progress*. One of the chief compilers was the above-mentioned Seiji Hishida, who, between penning his 1905 volume and coming to work for



Figure 7. Changchun's West Park. Source: Mantetsu 1937a.

Mantetsu, had worked for the Korean Government-General, helping compile *The Annual Report on Reform and Progress in Korea* between 1907 and 1917. Yet while the tone of the *Reports on Progress* was confident, other publications were downright exuberant. One observer went so far as to suggest that under Japanese guidance, Manchuria seemed finally to have entered modern history.⁷⁸ Kantōgun observers agreed.⁷⁹

One is tempted to dismiss writing like this as simple propaganda, but at the same time one cannot help but read such works as also expressing genuine hopes. Concrete progress was apparent—even some foreigners approved of Japanese activities. The British consul in Dalian, for example, noted in 1924 that “[f]oreign residents and travelers here agree that Dairen is a very well run city and compares favorably with towns of a similar size in Japan and even elsewhere.”⁸⁰

Beyond the creation of physical infrastructure, other activities could be interpreted as modern. In addition to economic development there was also the growth of an educational system, including universities in Dalian and Shenyang. Mantetsu also made a concerted effort to spread modern notions of sanitation and hygiene. Mantetsu's new hospitals and clinics began vaccinating people within the railway cities, and later included some outside as well.⁸¹ Japanese also took measures to contain epidemics. Perhaps the first time was during the cholera epidemic that broke out in Dalian and Yingkou in 1909. Other epidemics ensued, in part because of the ease of railway transport, but the railway cities played important roles in trying to combat their spread through quarantines and inspections.⁸² On a more mundane basis, Mantetsu officials began to ensure basic levels of sanitation in their cities by inspecting horse-carts, having garbage removed, sprinkling water on streets to keep dust down, and inspecting water purity.⁸³

Yet another kind of modern activity practiced in the Mantetsu railway towns involved leisure pursuits. For example, Mantetsu promoted Japanese tourism as a means of displaying the company's many accomplishments, as well as increasing profits.⁸⁴ Tickets on



Figure 8. Combating the plague in north Manchuria. Source: Mantetsu 1937a.

sale at Tokyo Station could take travelers to any station in Manchuria. Moreover, in addition to new parks, also featured public halls that included facilities for chess, billiards, and lectures as well as a cafeteria. Public entertainment could be found in theaters and auditoriums. Mantetsu also provided facilities for sports, especially

baseball and tennis. Eventually, baseball teams and sumo wrestlers from Japan toured Manchuria, and Manchurian teams competed in Japan. These tours could be followed in any of the various newspapers in Manchuria, the most important of which was the *Manshū Nichi Nichi Shinbun* 満州日々新聞. Records of the meetings of other kinds of clubs, ranging from brass bands to hiking groups—also encouraged by Mantetsu—were posted in these papers.

Clearly, Mantetsu was more than simply a railway company—it and its associated organizations endeavored to foster the growth of a modern society in its enclaves. At the same time, Manchurian experiences proved useful elsewhere. Gotō and his disciples, having gained valuable experience in Manchuria, returned to Japan to apply their lessons there, and modern cities played a key role in that effort. Gotō himself declared that the mission of urban planners was to help usher in a “new age in urban life” by providing new solutions for new problems.⁸⁵ Katō Yonokichi, Mantetsu’s busy urban planner, likewise was able to use his Manchurian experience at least once with regard to Korea.⁸⁶

Mantetsu went about its colonial projects in Manchuria in a consciously modern fashion, one that expressed a Japanese colonial modernity that had much in common with other colonial powers. Yet while they modeled their efforts on those of Europeans and North Americans, Japanese sought to improve upon those models and make them relevant for specific conditions within the Japanese empire. This is perhaps most evident in Mantetsu’s town-building project—no other imperialist power embarked on such a campaign.

Representing an imperialist Japanese state acting in a progressive, benevolent fashion, Mantetsu acted in some ways as an overseas extension of Japan’s limited and paternal “imperial democracy.”⁸⁷ As such, the modernity of this era became not just a broadly shared goal aimed at enticing the support of colonized subjects and building a strong Japan, but a cultural orientation that was widely embraced with enthusiasm, including many outside Mantetsu.

Despite this dedication, however, their creation was inherently uncertain. Probably most well known of the problems Japanese in Manchuria faced were those associated

with the rise of Chinese nationalism, especially after the 1926-28 Northern Expedition of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang, better known in the Wade-Giles romanization as the Kuomintang 国民党). Chiefly, these involved boycotts of Japanese goods and services, rival railway schemes, the assertion of Chinese taxation rights, and threats to unilaterally abolish extraterritoriality. Less well known, however, were a variety of other anxieties. Banditry was endemic, including piracy along the coast. Communism seemed to be spreading, especially among Koreans in Manchuria who often preferred Chinese to Japanese citizenship, even if the Japanese government forbade it. A resurgent Soviet Union was thought to be involved in a host of disquieting activities, including promoting communism and smuggling arms to Manchurian communists. Worse for Japanese entrepreneurs, the Soviets also suddenly seemed less inclined to allow fishing rights to Japanese in the waters around Sakhalin than they had formerly been, while at the same time becoming more interested in reasserting control over northern Manchuria. This was evident not only in economic development schemes but also through the use of force, as the short conflict between Soviet forces and the army of Zhang Xueliang 張學良 (1898-2001) demonstrated in the fall of 1929.⁸⁸ The downfall of Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938) in 1928 and the subsequent collapse of the New Economic Policy must also have played upon the minds of Japan's USSR-watchers. Until then, Japanese participation in the development of Siberia still seemed a possibility.

At the same time, it did not seem to many Japanese that the current system was capable of dealing with these challenges. Shockwaves from the run on the Bank of Taiwan in 1927 that sparked a panic in Japan reverberated also in Manchuria. And if the banking system seemed in jeopardy, Manchuria's main economic engine was also in the news, as Mantetsu proved susceptible to a number of scandals that tarnished its reputation. Moreover, neither Mantetsu nor the Japanese consular police seemed able to safeguard Japanese citizens in the summer of 1931, when a Japanese officer was executed by Chinese soldiers, and Korean farmers south of Changchun became the targets of Chinese vigilantes at Wanbaoshan 万宝山. Anti-Korean (and by implication anti-Japanese) riots quickly spread to Heilongjiang (Heilungkiang 黑龍江), but these were not the first instances of such violence—Chinese-Korean feuding had occurred several years earlier in Andong (Antung 安東). Even Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 (1878-1967), the consul-general in Shenyang between 1925 and 1928 and not a supporter of radical military intervention, had gone so far as to advocate expanding Japanese authority in Manchuria in order to secure investments and stabilize society.⁸⁹ Yet the foreign ministry was itself hamstrung. Not only did it tangle publicly with other ministries and outspoken activists over defining Japan's security, but within its own ranks were some who supported rival, radical alternatives.⁹⁰

Nor did it help that the popular press derided Japanese diplomats (and some in the military) for preferring postings to Europe over China, or that they reinforced a sense of urgency through constant reminders that the Russo-Japanese War had cost Japan 100,000 men and two billion yen.⁹¹ Still, despite these tribulations, the Japanese presence

in Manchuria continued to expand. This is evident in growing migration, the establishment of air routes, and continued Japanese investments. Japanese Manchuria was thriving, even while it was seemingly imperiled.⁹²

More forceful instances of Japanese policy in Manchuria attempting to deal with these issues before September 1931 were a matter of record. Several of the “twenty-one demands” the Japanese government made of China in 1915 concerned Manchuria.⁹³ Secret military activities to secure Japanese primacy in Manchuria were also longstanding.⁹⁴ Several of these were carried out without any sanction by the Japanese government, such as the assassination of Zhang Zuolin 張作林 (1875-1928). Given the growing popularity of radical sentiments in Japan itself, perhaps we should not be too surprised that the Japanese military in Manchuria would react in some way to these developments on their own initiative.

It is important to note, however, that overthrowing the Mantetsu order had some degree of popular support, not only in Japan, as Young has noted, but also in Manchuria. The most well-known activist group there was the Manchurian Youth League (滿州青年連盟), founded in 1928 to encourage the expansion of the Japanese presence.

British diplomatic observers reinforce this perspective. As early as 1928 observers in Beijing 北平 and Mukden reported that tensions over railways might some day result in some drastic event.⁹⁵ Indeed, the Mukden consul-general reasoned then that given Japanese concerns, the Japanese might find it necessary to some day occupy Manchurian territory.⁹⁶

Given the wealth of problems apparent in the Mantetsu era, it is reasonable to assume that many Japanese may well have preferred a wholesale change. This is not to say, however, that the men who carried out the Manchurian Incident anticipated exactly what was to follow. Yet the nature and extent of the problems apparent in Manchuria seems to have encouraged that more extreme measures would eventually be championed. A sense of crisis, perhaps akin to what Japanese experienced in the years preceding the Meiji Restoration, assured that a broadly shared cultural response would eventually follow.

By the fall of 1931, many Japanese in Manchuria were ready for something new. What was more, given the failings of the Chinese warlord regime, some Chinese were also inclined to accept something new, potential allies in the creation of a new order.⁹⁷

MANCHUKUO'S MODERNITY

*What whispers are these O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the seas?
Are all nations communing? is there going to be but one heart to the globe?
Is humanity forming en-masse? for lo, tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim,
The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war,*

No one knows what will happen next, such portents fill the days and nights;

The puppet state (*kairai kokka* 傀儡国家) of Manchukuo was neither a simple colony nor the fiefdom of an adventurist military. It was a much larger experiment, one attempting to solve not only the issue of Japanese control of Manchuria but also those issues stemming from the perceived need to transform Japan into a more fully industrial state, one capable of waging total war. To do this, Manchukuo's planners embraced a new kind of modernity.

Little of this modernity, however, proved actually to be brand new, as many of its chief components had been part of the Japanese intellectual landscape for some time. In this way, Manchukuo's administrators could assume there would be some popularity in Japan for their designs for a new society. Indeed, Manchukuo's new facades may well have been designed more with the Japanese public in mind than the "Manchukuoan." In this light, Manchukuo becomes the vanguard of a so-called "Shōwa Restoration," a movement aimed ultimately at renovating Japanese society at home. The numbers and ranks of bureaucrats that subsequently migrated to Manchukuo—and eventually returned to help renovate Japan—demonstrate that it was no sideshow.⁹⁸

Perhaps the most obvious statement of Manchukuo's modernity was its administrative form. No longer was it possible to simply conquer and annex a foreign land—the Kantōgun had to resort to the fig leaf of a nation-state. The army therefore, attempting to go beyond the forms of imperialism already in use, appealed to the last Manchu emperor Puyi 溥儀 (1906-1967), first as regent, later as emperor.⁹⁹

The Kantōgun supported this national fiction with modern concepts. One was "pan-Asianism," a vision that attempted to eclipse traditionally mono-ethnic nation states. However, while Manchukuo's specific slogans of Asian unity—such as "ethnic harmony" (*minzoku kyōwa* 民族協和)—were new, the underlying concepts were not. The concept of a pan-Asian brotherhood united to fend off imperialist Occidentals had long been a popular theme in Japanese—and probably all Asian—societies. However, for many Japanese pan-Asianists, this meant Japanese leadership of their fellow Asians.¹⁰⁰ Those committed to developing a new society in Manchukuo took this for granted.

As the concern for pan-Asianism suggests, the goals of Manchukuo's planners differed qualitatively from those who administered Manchuria in the previous era. While the Mantetsu era defined modernity almost materialistically—doubtless assuming that from material changes would emerge modern mentalities—Manchukuo authorities focused on morality, at least superficially. Manchukuo's basic ideological principle was the "kingly way" (*ōdō* 王道), a concept that supposedly reinvigorated Chinese tradition by making it more appropriate for a modern nation state. In this way the culture of Manchukuo was to surpass that of the Mantetsu era because it created an improved kind of national subject, one supposedly less beholden to the capitalist West and more in tune with Asian societies and traditions. In keeping with this slogan, the new state paid great attention to the development of schools and appropriate curricula. Of course, much of this new cul-

ture was never clearly expressed, and even its vague generalities turned out usually to be contradictory, if not hypocritical.¹⁰¹ However, the rhetoric resonated well within Japanese communities, both in Manchuria and in Japan, and much ink was spilt on the subject by academics and in the popular press.

Other concepts important for Manchukuo's revised modernity involved the role of the state. Preparing for war with the Soviet Union, the Manchukuoan economy was run in a quasi-Soviet manner, by state planning. This the Kantōgun felt was the best means of turning a predominantly rural economy into a modern, industrial one. In the wake of the Great Depression and the apparently rapid industrialization of the USSR, this seemed to make sense.¹⁰² Japan's "technology bureaucrats" in turn leapt on board to help create a newly modern infrastructure.¹⁰³

Political developments mirrored the economic. In the era of a growing enthusiasm for fascism, it made sense to organize the body politic accordingly, and Manchukuo assumed the structure of a one-party state.¹⁰⁴ At the time this was hailed as progress, and even if many of these endeavors later proved unworkable, Manchukuo initially served as the blueprint for later additions to the Japanese empire—such as the Philippines—as well as for later changes in Japan itself.

Much of Manchukuo's modernity was evident in its new capital, Xinjing (also Hsinking 新京; Shinkyō in Japanese), designed around the railway town and Chinese city at Changchun. Indeed, its very name—"New Capital"—connoted modernity. This was not to be a capital named for its location like Beijing 北京, Nanjing 南京, or Tokyo 東京, or simply by its role as a capital like Kyōto 京都. Manchukuo's capital was to be a modern capital, one with plazas, parks, public transportation, and the other amenities commonly found in a modern urban setting. At the same time, Xinjing's built environment also contrasted with Mantetsu's cities. Instead of compact, well-integrated railway towns, the puppet capital offered a sprawling layout



Figure 9. Map of Xinjing. Source: Hōten Tetsudō Kyoku 1939.

that generated grand vistas of monumental buildings. The style of the official buildings was similarly grandiose, as Japanese architects attempted to endow the new capital—and thus, the new state—with a distinctive facade, one that capped modern buildings with Asian rooflines. In doing so, the architects of the Capital Construction Bureau (Kokuto Kensetsu Kyoku 国都建設局) sought to display architecturally the goals and values of the new state. Indeed, following in the footsteps of Gotō Shimpei, they sought to lead Manchurian society in new directions through alterations to the built environment.¹⁰⁵

In keeping with the city's new role as national capital, the Capital Construction Bureau created national monuments to serve as fora for mass rallies and nationally significant events. Just north of the new palace designed for Puyi stood the five-story-tall Chūreitō 忠嶺塔, one of nine memorials scattered around the country dedicated to those who perished in the Manchurian Incident. The Monument to National Foundation 建国廟, built in 1940, sat at the south end of the city near the new academic quarter. Here, in a somewhat heavy style that blended elements of Chinese architecture south of the Great Wall with Japanese and the official Manchukuo style, Puyi reported Japanese military victories and prayed for the security of the new empire.¹⁰⁶

Much of what was deemed modern in Manchukuo's new capital, however, originated in the Mantetsu era. The electrical grid continued to expand, and new technologies, such as a wireless communications center and an airport, were incorporated into the city plan. New centers of recreation appeared, including a golf



Figure 10. Manchukuo's Hall of State (1936). Photo by author.



Figure 11. Supreme Court of Manchukuo (1938). Photo by author.



Figure 12. Chūreitō (1934). Source: postcard held at Nichibunken Library.

because Japan's "fundamental policy [in Manchuria] from the outset has been to advance economic development." Thus, Mantetsu had done more than modernize Manchuria's communications infrastructure:

We cannot help but look upon Manchuria of today with a deep feeling of satisfaction. In the course of a quarter century what was no more than a war-worn wilderness has been turned into one of the richest districts of China....Perhaps the most important service of this nature is the building of model cities at Mukden (Shenyang), Changchun, Antung (Andong), and many other important centers.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, most, if not all, discussions in English like Komatsu's tended to emphasize the creation of a modern state in Manchukuo more than any discussion of the "kingly way."¹⁰⁸ As Komatsu was no radical militarist (see below), it is important to note that a continuing elaboration of Mantetsu's legacy helped galvanize published support for the puppet state beyond the military and its backers. This too was evident in the built environment of Xinjing, witnessing as it did the expanded construction of hospitals, libraries, sports facilities, and universities. The bulk of this construction, however, continued in more internationally attuned styles rather than in any re-energized Asian style. This was evident in such prominent buildings as the head office of the new state bank and the res-

course, a horse-race track, and an enormous green belt encircling the city. To expand the city's economic base, light industry was also promoted, but was limited to the northeast corner of the city to insure that airborne pollution would be carried away from the city's center. All of these alterations reflected concerns apparent before the Manchurian Incident—but the sudden Japanese preoccupation with the city compelled their creation at this particular point in time, demonstrating that the capital's designers sought to make the city the most advanced it could be.

The public discourse surrounding Manchukuo at times also seemed rooted in the Mantetsu era. Harvard graduate Komatsu Takashi 小松隆 (1886-1965), for example, initially defended the seizure of Manchuria by suggesting that Japanese actions were taken in self-defense, in reaction to growing Chinese radicalism. In this way Japanese sought "to bring order out of chaos." This was logical he felt,

idence for the Kantōgun commandant.

Other changes in the built environment spoke to a wider audience. While real estate brokers were not permitted in the new capital—to help prevent the ravages of unrestrained capitalism—unsightly power lines and other cables were buried, to help prevent the clutter apparent in many modern cities. There was also a renewed push for modern housing, one more appropriate for a national capital than Mantetsu's dormitories. This included not only new apartments, but also rows of new single-family homes. Beyond the capital, new villages laid out according to modernist principles also began to appear, villages that, if built to their logical conclusion, would expand to cover the whole of Manchuria in an interlocking and mutually reinforcing pattern of agrarian militia cooperatives.¹⁰⁹

Other Mantetsu era trends apparent in the built environment were similarly elaborated upon. Public parks, first introduced to Manchuria by Mantetsu, became one of the new capital's most noted features. Xinjing provided enough



Figure 13. Bank of Manchukuo. Photo by author.



Figure 14. Kantōgun Commandant's Residence. Photo by author.



Figure 15. New housing in Shinkyō. Source: Mantetsu 1937a.

land to assure a ratio of 450 people per hectare of urban green space. This was thought to be about the same as North American cities yet three to four times more than European cities and ten times better than Kyoto.¹¹⁰ Transportation infrastructure similarly expanded. New roads and railways more closely integrated the capital with the rest of the country, and officials planned a more comprehensive network to integrate the entire country.¹¹¹ Links to Japan also increased, promoting the further development of Manchuria's small tourism industry.¹¹²

Discussions of what this signified are enlightening. Aiga Kensuke 相賀兼介 (1879-?), a Mantetsu employee who became the Capital Construction Bureau's first chief architect, suggested that Manchukuo's development was a marvel that could serve as a model for the Chinese Republic.¹¹³ A commentator in the *Journal of Manchurian Architecture* suggested that Xinjing, serving as a "modern, idealistic city" (*gendai risōteki no toshi* 現代理想的の都市) was helping to renovate not only architectural forms but civilization itself.¹¹⁴ Tokyo University engineering professor Kishida Hidetō 岸田日出刀 (1899-1966) agreed. To him it seemed that Japanese military and state-building activities in Manchuria were restarting Asian history.¹¹⁵

As with the comments made by Mantetsu officials before the Manchurian Incident, on one level these kinds of comments—and there were many of this sort—can be read simply as propaganda. Yet on another they indicate a general agreement on what Manchukuo, and by implication Japan, needed in order to deal with the various problems society confronted. As such these comments dovetail with reformist sentiments in Japan and indicate the emergence of a new cultural orientation.¹¹⁶

Not all Japanese, however, were in complete agreement. Seiji Hishida, the chronicler of progress in Japan's empire, wrote in 1940 that Japan's "responsibility" in East Asia consisted simply in keeping the peace between Chinese, Russians, and Japanese and in furthering regional economic development. His defense of Japanese actions after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (7 July 1937) betrays Mantetsu rather than Manchukuo sensibilities.¹¹⁷ The view of Itō Takeo 伊藤武雄 (1895-1984), one of a group of Mantetsu researchers arrested between September 1942 and June 1943, was more ambiguous. A product of the Taishō era, Itō genuinely wanted to aid China, yet it seemed to him that the enhanced powers Mantetsu's research bureau gained in the wake of the Manchurian Incident initially brought the agency closer to what Gotō Shimpei had originally intended. That said, Itō deemed the military's later suppression of their activities as a "fascist assault and repression by the military of our scientific work."¹¹⁸ While Itō enjoyed having enhanced authority to carry out research, he did not agree with the more authoritarian style of government.

These divergent views suggest that the specific culture of modernity Manchukuo sought to promote was troubled, perhaps fatally so. Many of the problems of the Mantetsu era remained, as did many of the features of that era. Moreover, sports, the cinema, and other such aspects of daily life continued, suggesting that Manchukuoan life was only partly revolutionary. Indeed, Manchukuo's revolutionary promise often proved

only to be only a blustery facade, leaving one to wonder how deeply revolutionary sentiments were actually spread throughout the Japanese population in Manchuria, not to mention the Chinese. Indeed, the Japanese courting of Chinese elites is instructive. Many Chinese in Manchuria apparently were willing to give the Japanese a chance after 1931, especially after the Chinese Nationalist government in Nanjing acquiesced in the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Japanese approaches to the Chinese community, however, were ad hoc and sporadic, suggesting that Manchukuo's modernity was forced and inauthentic.¹¹⁹

Beyond that, elements of Manchukuo's modernity proved simply not to be real. In particular, the vision of Asian solidarity proved largely fictitious, at least from the perspective of non-Japanese. Japanese not only controlled all of the state apparatus, but in the process they also treated other Asians terribly. Ethnic Koreans, for example—officially designated even before the Manchurian Incident as “external” Japanese (*gaichijin* 外地人), as opposed to ethnic Japanese from the Japanese archipelago who were defined as “internal” (*naichijin* 内地人) despite the equality implied by the 1910 Treaty of Annexation—were targeted repeatedly, on the suspicion that they were harboring anti-Japanese activists from the peninsula.¹²⁰ Chinese, however, suffered more, most notoriously from the activities of Unit 731, based in Harbin, and of Unit 100, based in the new capital.¹²¹ These units practiced bacteriological and other experiments upon countless unsuspecting Chinese, either those summarily rounded up and sent to their laboratories or those still in their villages when these units experimented with delivery systems in the field.¹²²

Evidence of horrific activities elsewhere in the empire suggests that the mobilization of science in the name of war, however gruesome, was part and parcel of Japan's prewar modernity at large.¹²³ Displaying a considered application of science and technology to meet immediate needs, such ghastly deeds might be considered part of the puppet-state's—and perhaps wartime Japan's—modernity. Vastly inferior numerically to Chinese and technologically inferior to Soviet and American military power, some Japanese resorted to whatever means they could to protect their economic and emotional investments on the continent.¹²⁴

Alternatively, perhaps numerical and technological inferiority alone do not explain such appalling activities. Perhaps the pursuit of modernity itself, reconfiguring the very bases of society as it proceeds, facilitates the creation of horrors, and the more radical the restructuring, the greater potential for depravity.¹²⁵ Even though the Mantetsu era witnessed its own dreadful aspects—namely racial hierarchy and assimilation—Manchukuo's ills far exceeded those of the earlier era.

Ignoring these cruelties, propagandists attempted to sell Manchukuo to Japanese at home as a modern state, one to which ordinary Japanese should be proud to contribute. And for many Japanese, at a distance, Manchukuo's modernity seemed to ring true.¹²⁶

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MANCHURIAN MODERNITIES

*Years prophetic! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly try to pierce it, is full of phantoms,
Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me,
This incredible rush and heat, this strange ecstatic fever of dreams O years!
Your dreams O years, how they penetrate through me! (I know not whether I
sleep or wake;)
The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring in shadow behind me,
The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, advance upon me.*

This essay has focused on two cultures of modernity, cultures that can perhaps be characterized best as state- or official-inspired, even if they were to varying degrees popularly supported. Other novel enterprises, however, also appeared in Manchuria, such as those envisioned by Japan's new religions. While Tenrikyō 天理教 missionaries may have been the most active, Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎 (1871-1948), accompanied by Russo-Japanese War veteran (and later founder of Aikidō 合気道) Ueshiba Morihei 植芝盛平 (1883-1969), attempted to found an ideal religious community for Ōmotokyō 大本教 in 1924.¹²⁷ Even if they did not agree with officially sanctioned visions, they did represent communities of shared goals and values seeking to build new kinds of societies. Perhaps they too qualify as vying cultures.

Manchuria's two major forms of modernity are of enduring significance for contemporary Japan. This is evident in the wealth of publications concerning Manchuria that have appeared since the normalization of ties with the People's Republic of China. While many such publications initially focused on contemporary conditions in China under Mao, it wasn't long before a host of others began to offer reminiscences of Japan's former empire.¹²⁸ Some even discussed the darker aspects of the experience of Manchukuo.¹²⁹

The reasons for this significance are usually understood to involve Japanese investment in and migration to Manchuria, as well as the prolonged and intense public attention given to Manchuria at home. Other reasons, however, are evident. Manchuria's role as a laboratory, for example, is difficult to underestimate. Not only was Mantetsu an experimental vehicle for Japanese colonial development, but Manchukuo became a model for later additions to the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as well as for wartime reforms at home. Moreover, as many of these activities seemed modern and progressive, it has proved difficult for many Japanese to disavow entirely those efforts in the postwar world. Indeed, some postwar writers have pointed to prewar Japanese accomplishments in Manchuria with pride.¹³⁰

Moreover, much of Japan's wartime leadership proved able to continue in power, eventually laying the groundwork for key components of Japan's postwar economic recovery.¹³¹ This was most famously the case with politicians like Kishi Nobusuke (Shinsuke) 岸信介 (1896-1987) and Yoshino Shinji 吉野信次 (1888-1971), but the less famous were also influential. Consider the postwar creation of the Shinkansen, or "bullet

train.” Its father was one-time Mantetsu employee Sogō Shinji 十河信二 (1884-1981). Another example involves academia—some of the remaining members of Mantetsu’s Economic Research Bureau went on to found the Institute of Developing Economies, an independent research organization still in existence today.

Another good example is Komatsu Takashi, an official at Tōyō Kisen 東洋汽船 and the Asano Shipyard 浅野造船 before the war, and at Japan Steel Tube (Nippon Kōkan 日本鋼管) afterwards. He was more than simply a businessman—he attended the Washington Naval Conference and published a defense of the seizure of Manchuria (cited above). Despite this past, he participated in the demobilization of postwar Japan and became president of the Japan-America Society (Nichibei Kyōkai 日米協会), having helped reinstate Japan Rotary International without having to purge any of its prewar leadership.¹³² Despite participation on the margins of empire, individuals such as Komatsu proved able to reinvent themselves and remain in public life. In the process they helped reinvent Japan, creating yet another, new culture of modernity.

It is an intriguing modernity, because constrained by the rejection of many of the more usual forms of national symbolism, Japan’s postwar national identity often seems to focus inordinately on the creation of an explicitly modern society. Perhaps this helps explain the particular way in which postwar Japanese have viewed places like Manchuria. In contrast, places like Manchuria. In contrast, for Chinese and Koreans, accepting prewar Japanese activities as modern is anathema. For them, postwar national identities have tended to involve defining a Japanese “other” depicted by the worst incidents attributable to Japanese.

This suggests that to get around current international dilemmas, not only Japanese but also Chinese and Koreans would do well to reconsider recent history in a way that includes more nuanced definitions of the modern. Japanese, of course, need to acknowledge more genuinely the cruelties that stemmed from their pursuits of the modern. At the same time, it should be conceded that not only did many Asians collaborate with the Japanese,¹³³ but important aspects of contemporary Chinese and Korean society are in part derived from Japanese colonial initiatives.

This essay has suggested that the concept of modernity is relevant—if not indispensable—for the study of the prewar Japanese empire. This is because modernity itself is a cultural construct subject to debate and modification, and the evolution of this set of perceptions reflects broad social change. Moreover, in places like former imperialist possessions, administrators had unfettered—or perhaps less hampered—political power as well as less critical public attention, rendering it easier to go about creating modernity. In turn, this makes the colonial setting more conducive to the historian to study modernity. Indeed, since colonial modernities eventually had significant impact in their associated metropolises, their significance is far from peripheral, which means that these kinds of studies are likely to proliferate.

Despite the growing interest in modernity, colonial modernity, and postmodernity,

however, a certain tension is evident, a tension that centers on the problem of definition. Postmodernists do not define modernity in the ways that historians interested in colonial modernity do. The postmodern perception, originating in studies of literature, presents modernity as *passé*, as a mode of thinking that has come and gone. Initially focusing on modernity's birth in the European Enlightenment, postmodernists typically address the universalism and optimism present in modernist views in order to serve modernists a dose of reality. While modernity was all about promise and progress, postmodernity is all about dismantling the modern perspective because it is inherently problematic. Postmodernity targets especially the naiveté and hubris of those who have sought to create modernity, faults most modernists would never have suspected of themselves—and quite probably would have been galled to discover. As such, postmodern scholarship offers a useful corrective to accepted wisdom. The Japanese projects outlined here are justifiably vulnerable to postmodern criticisms.

The postmodern approach, however, presents its own difficulties for the historian. First, the logic of postmodernity assumes separate and identifiable stages in human history, something anathema to historians. Second, there is a difference in orientation. Postmodern theory consists mainly of critical reflection. Historians concerned with modernity, however, seek to situate historical actors in particular milieus in order to explain historical—and indirectly contemporary—contexts. To do this, however, involves creating the modern today. This is because people now, as then, continue to create the modern, even if some do so by resorting to self-described post-modern points of view.

Be that as it may, the crucial question now is, can these two perspectives be bridged? It seems that they can, because a wider definition of modernity—one including the darker sides of this experience—also calls into question the modern project. Moreover, the definition used here suggests that modernity still has yet to be reached—that contemporary architects of society are still trying to define it.

The poet Shirotori Seigo 白鳥省吾 (1890-1973) was another fan of Walt Whitman's, publishing Japanese translations of what he thought were the seventy most representative poems of *Leaves of Grass* in 1919. Shirotori liked Whitman for his honesty—Whitman boldly explored human physicality without becoming blasphemous or coarse. At the same time, Shirotori thought Whitman to be a practical idealist. It seemed to Shirotori that Whitman's Christian idealism and frank licentiousness united the Bible with Homer, enabling his poetry to fuse objective science with religiosity, yet at the same time demonstrate a democratic spirit.¹³⁴ Shirotori's later work showed similar inclinations. For example, his 1926 compilation of Meiji and Taishō poems and songs documented the emergence of a new age in Japan, "the age of democratic poetry" (*minshūshi jidai* 民衆詩時代). This he thought began in earnest with the surge in popular spirit associated with the outbreak of the First World War.¹³⁵ In time, however, Shirotori's own work demonstrated another shift—he too came to extol the virtues inherent in the Japanese coloniza-

tion of Manchuria. Indeed, he came to see Manchuria as a land ripe for the promise of modernity.¹³⁶

How does one make sense of poets like Shirotori? Was he so absent-minded as to not notice Manchukuo's problems when he visited the puppet state in 1939? Or was he so enamored with modernity's promise that he willingly looked the other way in the meantime? I suspect the latter to be the case.

Our task now is to consider the entirety of this modernist project—how *bunmei kaika* included *fukoku kyōhei*, how a shining train network entailed racial hierarchy and a privileged elite, and how pan-Asian “ethnic harmony” ended up being imbricated in a police state and mass murder. Even if the links between progressive and cruel—even barbarous—activities are poorly understood, they are there. A Japanese historian once noted that Manchukuo resembled the chimera, a composite beast, in its incorporation of a variety of participants and goals.¹³⁷ In a similar vein, a student of American history once commented that revulsion against American foreign policy cannot be understood unless the progressive aspects of American foreign policy are studied along with the injurious.¹³⁸ In order to understand what modernity is—as well as what our relationship to it is—a holistic perspective is necessary, and the only way to do that is through a more nuanced understanding of the culture of modernity.

Or as Whitman observed, “The proof of the poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it.”¹³⁹ Shirotori did not speak only for himself—he represents two generations that latched onto divergent Manchurian modernities, modernities that waves of prewar Japanese absorbed and sought earnestly to bring to fruition.

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NOTES

- ¹ This and all subsequent quotations from the poem "Years of the Modern" (1891) are from Whitman 1982, pp. 597-8.
- ² First published in 1855, *Leaves of Grass* went through five revisions by 1891. For a general discussion of Whitman's reception in Japan see Matsuhara 1957.
- ³ As suggested by the poet Arishima Takeo 有島武郎 (1878-1923) in Keene 1998, p. 478. Matsuhara discusses Uchimura's perceptions of Whitman in Matsuhara 1957, pp. 14-17.
- ⁴ Natsume 1892. A brief discussion of this article—which originally appeared in *Tetsugaku zasshi* 哲学雑誌 7:68 (1892)—suggesting that it was Whitman's egalitarianism that drew Sōseki most, can be found in Keene 1998, p. 307.
- ⁵ Others impressed by Whitman included many of Japan's up and coming literary elites, including Kaneko Chikusui 金子筑水 (1870-1937), Takayama Rinjirō 高山林次郎 [Chogyū 樗牛] (1871-1902), Asano Wasaburō 浅野和二郎 (1874-1937), Noguchi Yonejirō 野口米次郎 (1875-1947), and Osanai Kaoru 小山内薫 (1881-1928), as well as some who went on to form the Shirakaba 白樺 ("White Birch") Society. On that group, see Matsuhara 1957 and Suzuki 1977. For Whitman's influence on Arishima Takeo, who founded a "Leaves of Grass" literary society in Japan, see also Kunitomo 1938, pp. 180-185. A general discussion of the Shirakaba School in English with some reference to Whitman is Keene 1998, pp. 441-505.
- ⁶ At least eighteen translations of *Leaves of Grass* appeared in Japan between 1919 and 1950. Matsuhara 1957, p. 10.

- ⁷ One example is Fukuda Masao 福田正夫 (1893-1952) 1916. Shirotori Seigo maintained that the kind of free expressionism associated with Whitman became popular especially after 1907. Shirotori 1928, pp. 70-71.
- ⁸ Hearn once wrote that *Leaves of Grass* consisted of “an eccentric, tiresome, flatulent, raw volume of rhapsodies.” Matsuhara 1957, pp. 12-14.
- ⁹ On Whitman’s exploitation of new daguerreotype images, see Hartnett 2002, especially chapter four: “Whitman’s Pose, the Daguerreotype, and the Dialectics of Commodification, Self-Making, and Democracy,” pp. 132-172. Matsuhara, however, notes that the first published photograph of Whitman did not appear in Japan until 1901. Matsuhara 1957, p. 21.
- ¹⁰ “[T]he genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislatures, not in its ambassadors or authors or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors...but always most in the common people.” Whitman 1982, pp. 5-6.
- ¹¹ Matsuhara in particular reinforces the perception of Whitman as a prophet.
- ¹² Garon 1994. In addition to calling attention to this issue in this article, Garon has also applied this perspective in Garon 1987 and 1997. Other examples of this perspective are Minichiello 1998 and Vlastos 1998.
- ¹³ While Japanese and Chinese texts typically put this term in quotation marks or prefix it with a character meaning “false” or “sham” (偽), this essay does not follow either of these practices and follows instead what is common practice in English language texts for reasons of simplicity only.
- ¹⁴ Although the labeling of the region as Manchuria encouraged the perception that it was an autonomous entity, the term is rather problematic. Originally thought to designate the homeland of the Manchus, in reality the western half included mainly lands belonging to Mongol allies. Its supposed autonomy, moreover, ignored centuries of linkages established between residents of the region and residents of China (and Korea). Despite this ambiguity, however, imperialist competition resulted in the term’s reification, though today Chinese do not use the term because of its connotations of autonomy. An enlightening discussion of some Qing perceptions of Manchuria is Elliot 2000.
- ¹⁵ On this institution, see Coox 1989.
- ¹⁶ Ishida 1998 makes this point with regard to Korea—that policies of assimilation implemented there coincided with the creation of citizens within Japan itself and are therefore interconnected.
- ¹⁷ Young 1998, p. 428.
- ¹⁸ This perspective was derived most notably from the series entitled *Studies in the Modernization of Japan*, including Lockwood 1965, Ward 1968, Jansen 1969, Dore 1971, Morley 1971, and Shively 1971.
- ¹⁹ See, for example, the discussion in John Dower, “E. H. Norman and the Uses of History,” in Dower 1975, pp. 3-108.
- ²⁰ For studies highlighting modernist impulses apparent in Japanese activities in Manchuria, see Tucker 1999, Sewell 2000, and Buck 2002. Studies in English concerned with the extension of modern technology in the Japanese empire in Manchuria are Mimura 1998 and Yang 2003.
- ²¹ For general discussions of colonial modernity see Barlow 1997 and Wright 1991. For a discussion of recent scholarship addressing colonial modernity in Korea see Matsumoto 2002.
- ²² Still the most useful texts in English outlining this event and the motivations behind it are Ogata

1964 and Peattie 1975.

- ²³ The Manchurian experience provides an especially insightful case study because Japanese attention focused on Manchuria early in Japan's quest for empire and remained steadfast until the dissolution of that empire. Indeed, Young 1998 goes so far as to term Manchukuo the "Jewel in the Crown," though she was not the first to use the precious stone metaphor with regard to the puppet state. See Collier and Malone 1936. Of course, the phrase was also long used by Britons to describe their empire in India.
- ²⁴ On Japanese perceptions of Manchuria since 1945, see Sewell 2003.
- ²⁵ A popular definition of modernity used by sociologists, for example, includes the appearance of secular forms of political power and authority, the use of monetized patterns of commercial exchange, the replacement of traditional social hierarchies with new class formations, and the decline of a religious world view in favor of rationalist, individualistic, and materialist cultures. See Hall 1996, p. 8 and *passim*.
- ²⁶ See, for example, Latour 1993.
- ²⁷ Jeffrey Herf argues that "(t)here is no such thing as modernity in general. There are only national societies, each of which becomes modern in its own fashion." Herf 1984, p. 1.
- ²⁸ An illustrative examination of the dilemmas faced by twentieth century Japanese intellectuals with regard to defining modernity in Japan is Harootunian 2000. A more contemporary perspective considering shifting definitions of modernity in the People's Republic of China is Rofel 1999.
- ²⁹ See, for example, Irokawa 1985.
- ³⁰ Many sources argue this, but some studies suggest more strongly independent Japanese creations of the modern. See Howell 1995, Powelson 1997, and Yamamoto 1992.
- ³¹ Intriguingly, Abramovitz 1986 emphasizes the need for what Abramovitz calls "social capability" in order to make technological catching up possible.
- ³² The Meiji Restoration of 1868 was practically simultaneous with events restructuring other societies elsewhere to be more conducive to the growth of industrial capitalism. These included the creation of constitutional government in Austria (1860) and the Dual Monarchy (1867), the emancipation of Russian serfs (1861), and the unifications of Italy (1870) and Germany (1871).
- ³³ On the built environment see Coaldrake 1996. Nor were Japanese alone among Asians in this endeavor—see Aasen 1998.
- ³⁴ Examples of this process can be found in Jansen and Rozman 1986. In the political sphere, debate of course also sparked dissension and rebellion. See Bowen 1980.
- ³⁵ Westney 1987.
- ³⁶ Pollock 1986.
- ³⁷ One early proponent of Japanese colonization did so not only because of apparent Japanese decline but also explicitly because of British and Dutch maritime strength. See the discussion on Honda Toshiaki (本田利明, 1744-1821) in Keene 1969, pp. 104-6, 180-9.
- ³⁸ A useful historical overview of the Japanese empire is Beasley 1987.
- ³⁹ The Meiji government and academics at Tokyo University were the key people involved in introducing Spencer's thought to Japan. Yamashita 1984 and Jansen 1984.
- ⁴⁰ Jansen 1984. People like Seiji Hishida rationalized it this way: "Japan...today enjoys consular juris-

diction in the territories of China, Korea and Siam, because her civilization is superior to theirs....It is the desire of Japan to preserve in the Orient the national status of those of her sister Asiatic nations which are not yet subjugated by foreign powers, and to lead them to that light of western civilization which she is now enjoying without having abandoned her national individualism." Hishida 1905, pp. 255-256, 258-259.

⁴¹ Crowley 1966, Hackett 1971, Westney 1986.

⁴² Lynn 1998.

⁴³ Ho 1984, Molony 1989, Wray 1984, Wray 1989.

⁴⁴ Having served in the Sino-Japanese War, Takahashi helped draw up the surrender terms presented to Li Hongzhang. He went on to become a legal scholar and a member of the House of Peers.

⁴⁵ Takahashi's ultimate solution to Russian expansion though was not through the use of force. Instead he argued for the formation of a Chinese buffer state between the two empires, something he rationalized through European precedent dating back to the treaties of Utrecht and Westphalia. He envisioned China's new status as one protected by a four power treaty including Russia, Japan, Britain and the United States. See Takahashi 1904, pp. 20-56. The Caroline incident involved a steamer that had been taken by rebel forces and moored on an island in the river above Niagara Falls. During a night assault, British marines captured the ship, burned it, and cast it over the falls. The British commander's version of events is Drew 1864.

⁴⁶ Hishida 1905, p. 258. Hishida Seiji 菱田静治 inverted the order of his name when publishing in English.

⁴⁷ For example, the Japanese in China initially adopted the treaty-port model already in use.

⁴⁸ From a base of 16,612 in 1906, the Japanese civilian population in Manchuria grew to 233,000 in 1930 and topped one million in 1940. Not all of these were immigrants, however, as many came only to work temporarily. This means that more Japanese experienced life in Manchuria than these numbers suggest. Manshikai 1964-65, vol. 1, p. 84 and Manshū Iminshi Kenkyūkai 1976.

⁴⁹ A brief overview of this organization is Nishizawa 2000.

⁵⁰ On the difficulties Mantetsu faced, see Matsusaka 2001. The Japanese consular service itself was also subject to internal frictions—see Brooks 2000.

⁵¹ Nor was Gotō an isolated figure. He was followed as Mantetsu president by Nakamura Zekō (中村是公, 1867-1927), a Finance Ministry bureaucrat who first worked with Gotō in the Taiwan civil administration. Nakamura went on to serve as a minister in the Hara cabinet and mayor of Tokyo. Other Mantetsu presidents were also noteworthy, including Matsuoka Yōsuke (松岡洋右, 1880-1946), later foreign minister, who took Japan out of the League of Nations.

⁵² Kitaoka 1988 and Koshizawa 1988, pp. 9, 12-15, 61-7. The *Toshi kōron* is still published today.

⁵³ Kitaoka 1998, pp. 38-45.

⁵⁴ Chen 1995.

⁵⁵ Having written a preliminary proposal for Kodama entitled an *Outline of Administrative Policy for Manchuria* (*Manshū keieisaku kōgai* 満州経営策梗概), which focused first on the development of the port at Dalian and a regional railway infrastructure, Gotō may not have initially wanted the chief position for himself—his eye may have been on a position in Korea. See Kitaoka 1988, pp. 83-85. However, having proved himself worthy of Kodama's trust on Taiwan, Gotō received Kodama's sup-

port to become Mantetsu's first president over the objections of Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841-1909). Citing American and British concerns, Itō had wanted a different organizational approach, one that entailed greater cooperation with Chinese, but Kodama asserted that a single Japanese administration of the area would be more beneficial to all parties. See Beasley 1987, pp. 96-98.

⁵⁶ A useful description of Russian-built Dalny is Cary 1903.

⁵⁷ On the British East India Company as a model for Mantetsu see Manshikai 1964, volume 1, p. 30. On the use of the Russian Chinese Eastern Railway, which used joint ventures with Chinese banks as a tool of imperialist encroachment, as a model see Howe 1987.

⁵⁸ The exact name of this institution changed often over its thirty-eight year life. A historical overview of it can be found in Young 1966, but there are also many publications in Japanese that discuss it.

⁵⁹ The train was of course also an important symbol of modernity in early Meiji.

⁶⁰ Koshizawa 1986, Koshizawa 1988, Nishizawa 1996a, and Perrins 1997.

⁶¹ On Okada, see Nishizawa 1996b, pp. 17-18, 148. On Tatsuno, see Fujimori 1993, pp. 218-235. For a discussion of Tokyo Station see Coaldrake 1996, pp. 222-39. In designing Tokyo Station, then director of the national railways Gotō Shimpei reportedly asked Tatsuno to make something that would impress the world. See Seidensticker 1991, p. 78.

⁶² In 1910, twenty-two full and 268 part-time members of this association were listed as living in Korea, Taiwan, and China—roughly thirteen percent of the total. This proportion increased over time, as by 1942 these numbers increased to 496 full members and 1,999 part-time members, some twenty percent of the overall figure. See Nishizawa 1996, pp. 3-4.

⁶³ Initially published in 1921 as the *Manshū kenchiku kyōkai zasshi* 満洲建築協會雜誌.

⁶⁴ Sewell 2000.

⁶⁵ Koshizawa 1993, pp. 196-198.

⁶⁶ Also known as Mukden 盛京 and Fengtian 奉天.

⁶⁷ Koshizawa 1978, pp. 19-21.

⁶⁸ This urban borderland is a subject as yet poorly understood and represents a great opportunity for future research.

⁶⁹ Buck 2002, p. 76 and South Manchuria Railway 1935, p. 11. On Changchun's Mantetsu era history see Koshizawa 1988 and Sewell 2000.

⁷⁰ Although this discussion focuses on Mantetsu's new railway cities, Gotō Shimpei initially hoped to transform the Manchurian countryside as well, one of his goals being to encourage a half million Japanese colonists to migrate to rural areas. That effort proved unsuccessful. See Gotō Shimpei, *Gotō Shimpei den*, as cited in Manshikai 1964, vol. 1, p. 32.

⁷¹ Koshizawa 1988, pp. 51-53.

⁷² On electrical infrastructure see Mantetsu 1929 and Mantetsu 1931.

⁷³ Satō 1985, pp. 81-82.

⁷⁴ Matsumuro 1922.

⁷⁵ Tanabe 1922.

⁷⁶ Reports can be found in Mantetsu 1926, Mantetsu 1927, Mantetsu 1937a, and Mantetsu 1939. Shorter, more specific reports are abundant.

⁷⁷ For example, see South Manchuria Railway 1924.

- ⁷⁸ Dazai 1925, p. 11. Some began to write in this vein not long after the Japanese acquisition of the railway. One wrote about Manchuria's "inevitable development" (*bitsuzen hassei* 必然発生) and "final destiny" (*shūkyoku meibun* 終極命運) as early as 1913. See Hatori 1913, pp. 466, 473.
- ⁷⁹ See, for example, Kantōgun shireibu 1924, volume 2, p. 360, and Yamada 1926, volume 2, p. 24.
- ⁸⁰ FO 262/1616/448.
- ⁸¹ Mantetsu 1939.
- ⁸² In addition to the continuing accounts of plague and cholera prevention in the series *Reports on Progress*, see Iijima 2000, and Iijima and Wakimura 2001.
- ⁸³ Mantetsu 1939.
- ⁸⁴ Mantetsu 1937b.
- ⁸⁵ Gotō 1921.
- ⁸⁶ Katō 1918.
- ⁸⁷ Gordon 1991.
- ⁸⁸ Patrikeeff 2002.
- ⁸⁹ Dower 1979, pp. 58-88.
- ⁹⁰ Brooks 2000.
- ⁹¹ Coox 1989, p. 407.
- ⁹² As these comments only outline the anxieties Japanese in Manchuria experienced in the years leading up to the Manchurian Incident, a fuller treatment of this topic is currently the subject of an article in preparation.
- ⁹³ Lu 1997, pp. 382-4.
- ⁹⁴ On the Kantōgun's various initiatives, see McCormack 1977, Ogata 1964, Peattie 1975, and Valliant 1972.
- ⁹⁵ FO 262/1710/635-641.
- ⁹⁶ FO 262/1708/140.
- ⁹⁷ Mitter 2000.
- ⁹⁸ Johnson 1982, Nishizawa 1995.
- ⁹⁹ One historian has suggested that Japanese activities in Manchukuo were more akin to Soviet activities in postwar eastern Europe than anything else. See Duus 1989, p. xxviii. I have suggested that it could also have been similar to American efforts in Vietnam (Sewell 2000).
- ¹⁰⁰ Jansen 1984.
- ¹⁰¹ For a brief discussion of the kingly way as practiced see Mitter 2000, pp. 95-100.
- ¹⁰² Peattie 1975.
- ¹⁰³ Mimura 1998.
- ¹⁰⁴ Despite common perceptions of fascism as backwards, it is useful to recall that at the time of the establishment of Manchukuo, fascism was often considered a progressive and even modern phenomenon. See Eley 1983, p. 71.
- ¹⁰⁵ This is perhaps argued most specifically in Sewell 2000, but relevant details are also available in Buck 2002, Koshizawa 1988, and Tucker 1999.
- ¹⁰⁶ Sewell 2000.
- ¹⁰⁷ Komatsu 1932, pp. 5-9. Komatsu also referred to the attempt to gain Chinese cooperation by allow-

ing them to buy shares of Mantetsu, neglecting to mention that not many could have afforded to do so.

¹⁰⁸ See also, for example, Bureau of Information 1938 and Collier and Malone 1936.

¹⁰⁹ See Tucker 1999, chapter four: “City Planning as Architectural Modernism: Ideal Immigrant Farm Villages and an Ideal Industrial City.”

¹¹⁰ According to Sato 1985, pp. 74, 77, the ratios of people to green hectare were Xinjing: 450, North American cities: 400-500, European cities: 1,800-2,000, Tokyo: 10,700, and Kyoto: 40,800.

¹¹¹ Sewell 2000 and South Manchuria Railway 1935, p. 6.

¹¹² See, for example, Mantetsu 1935.

¹¹³ Aiga 1942, p. 7.

¹¹⁴ Naitō 1937, pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁵ Kishida 1942, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Many examples of radical reformist thought in Japan appeared in the 1930s and 1940s. One example including a demand for violent action, the wresting of power from the Caucasian societies, and the creation of a new order based on a new kind of morality is Mutō 1937.

¹¹⁷ Hishida 1934, Hishida 1940.

¹¹⁸ Fogel 1988, p. 203 and Sewell 2003.

¹¹⁹ Mitter 2000.

¹²⁰ This history remains to be written, at least in English, though some of it can be gleaned in Lee 1983.

¹²¹ Nor were these the only units guilty of mass what I judge to have been murder, as detachments of the Imperial Japanese Army carried out executions and massacres elsewhere in the new state, such as at Pingdingshan (平頂山).

¹²² See Harris 1994, though there is much discussion of this in Japanese as well.

¹²³ For example, see Ban 2001 on the Noborito Research Institute.

¹²⁴ The Nomonhan Incident (May to September 1939) perhaps especially encouraged Japanese to rethink their military capabilities. For a discussion of the Japanese weaknesses apparent in this conflict, see Coox 1985.

¹²⁵ Francisco Goya's (1746-1828) *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* (1803) evokes this modern predicament well: if one is not vigilant over the entirety of the project—which involves nothing less than the reordering of a society's way of living—who knows what may issue forth?

¹²⁶ Young 1998.

¹²⁷ As part of celebrations marking the tenth year of Manchukuo's founding, in 1942 Ueshiba returned to demonstrate his martial prowess for Puyi.

¹²⁸ See, for example the six volume series *Manshū no tabi* 満州の旅 published by Kokusho Kankōkai 国書刊行会 in 1981 and 1982.

¹²⁹ Asahi Shimbun 1983. For a review of this literature see Sewell 2003.

¹³⁰ One example is Kokusai Zenrin Kyōkai 1975.

¹³² Johnson 1982.

¹³² The evidence linking Komatsu the Rotarian with the authorship of the article defending Japanese actions in Manchuria is circumstantial.

¹³³ Mitter 2000, Barrett and Shyu 2001.

¹³⁴ Shirotori 1919, pp. 6-8.

¹³⁵ Intending his study to serve as a national primer (*kokumin tokuhon* 国民読本), Shirotori situated contemporary work within a review of “3000 years” of Japanese poems and songs. See Shirotori 1928, pp. i-ii, 3-5, 79-80, and *passim*.

¹³⁶ Shirotori 1940.

¹³⁷ Yamamuro 1993.

¹³⁸ Williams 1962, p. 9.

¹³⁹ Whitman 1982, p. 26.

要旨

日本史における“近代”の再考察 —戦前日本帝国の近代化の概念—

ビル・スウェル

日本がアジアにおいて行った帝国主義活動は、経済的動機、または権力欲がもたらしたとされている。しかし、本稿は、その文化的側面に注目し、それが戦前大日本帝国の植民地政策の実行者達の多くにとって重要視されたと論じる。二十世紀前半に、「近代」の概念化が日本で議論されたなかで、その諸定義が満州（中国北東部、1932年から1945年まで満州国）を構成する際に実践された。それは日本内地の社会推移を反映し、進歩的とされていた。単に帝国を形成するためでなく「適切」な帝国の先駆者として、近代的日本の新たな姿を投影するものであった。これらの見解が中心的な位置を占めていたことは、現在の日本人の多くはアジア隣国に対して戦前の行為を謝罪する必要があると思わない理由のひとつかもしれない。さらに、本稿では、「近代」を理論的に捉える場合、抽象的概念でなく、広く共有された価値観と方針が絶えず再編されていく文化的加工物であると考えている。